

The Future Aspirations of Generation X Principals in London, New York And Toronto: Exploring The Relationship Between Retention and System-Level Policies and Practices That Enhance Commitment

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As many cities and countries face teacher and leader shortages, recruitment and retention policies and practices are gaining importance. In education, scholarly and policy often focus remains on recruitment of new professionals. We argue that retention of highly skilled professionals is a key element of high performance in schools, organisations and systems. that retention structures and strategies.

As Global Cities (Sassen, 1991) are often at the epicenter of new innovations and initiatives, our overall research and this paper focus on three Global Cities including London, New York and Toronto (Foreign Policy, 2009). We draw on findings from our three-year Global City Leaders study examining the leadership experiences, practices and aspirations of Generation X (under-40-year-old) principals and vice-principals. This paper builds on GenerationX leader perspectives their future aspirations to reflect on the relationship between **retention and organizational/system-level performance**.

GenerationX leaders are currently entering senior school leadership roles and are recognized as different than previous generations. GenXers have grown up in the most rapidly developing technological era in history and are noted to be globally minded, techno-savvy, informal (Zemke et al, 2000) and collaborative (Smola and Sutton, 2002). These oft-shared traits shape GenXers' desire for workplace collaboration (Smola & Sutton, 2002), mobility (Duscher & Cowin, 2004) and diversity. GenXers also seek more experimental organizational structures (Kunreuther, 2003). As these characteristics are markedly different from those of their predecessor Baby Boomers, who hold most of the school leadership posts at the moment, the GCL project examined how a small sample of this new cohort of GenXers were experiencing their careers, leadership and shaping their future aspirations.

The paper begins with an overview of the GCL project's conceptual framework and research approach. Second, we review the intersecting bodies of research and thinking that influenced the overall study including Global Cities, urban education, school leadership and generational theory. To frame the analysis presented in this paper, we draw on corporate and educational research on high performance organisations and employee retention. Third, we examine the overall social and educational policy context in each city with specific attention to the system-level structures and strategies with oversight and/or power over leadership recruitment and retention. We reflect on how different jurisdictional policies and structures may enhance retention of the overall teacher and leader population. We examine the influence of wider social policies including pensions, maternity/paternity leave and flexible working.

We analyse how each city (and wider jurisdiction) approaches leader recruitment, development and retention. We examine the structures, supports and incentives for retention. Drawing on our interview evidence, we juxtapose how GenX leaders describe their careers and future aspirations with how each system defines, structures and designs leadership careers and roles. We identify synergies or contentions between how GenXers want their careers to evolve and their system-level contexts. We posit that high-performing systems will need specific GenX retention strategies

including: job sharing; flexible work arrangements; sabbaticals/short-term assignments; and, concerted system-level retention approaches. This paper will interest policy, practice leaders and academics interested in system-level attainment, professional workforce issues and retention.